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UNCLAS BRASILIA 001522

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C O R R E C T E D COPY (TEXT - PARA 1)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CUBA: NSC-DIRECTED COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY REVIEW
REGARDING SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. A) BRASILIA 1454

[B](#). B) STATE 96300

[C](#). C) 2004 BRASILIA 2938

- [1](#)1. (U) Text below is in response to reftel B tasking.
- [1](#)2. (SBU) Brazil has close relations with Cuba and through engagement hopes to spread democratic values to the island. While the GOB is reluctant to criticize publicly the human rights policies of the Castro regime, behind the scenes the Brazilian government is often critical of both Cuba's lack of democratic process and human rights violations. Much of this stems from the fact that senior leaders in the Lula Administration and the PT (i.e., the President's party) sought refuge in Cuba when confronted with persecution by Brazil's former military government. Brazil consistently abstains on UN resolutions critical of Cuba's policies, and this year the Brazilian government voted to abstain on the Cuba resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) in Geneva. Analysts here note, however, that the GOB's abstention reflects more worries that the issue has been politicized at the UNCHR than any desire to whitewash the abysmal human rights record of the Castro government. Brazilian NGOs and particularly Brazilian journalists tend to be less reticent than the Brazilian government in publicly criticizing Castro and Cuba's treatment of opponents to the regime. In 2004, the Brazilian press attacked the GOB's failure to speak out regarding the harsh sentencing dealt out to Cuban human rights activists; at that time, the Brazilian Senate passed a public resolution critical of the Cuban government's crackdown on the dissidents.
- [1](#)3. (SBU) With respect to Brazilian investment in Cuba, beyond the transactions reported in reftel B, the Brazilian petroleum parastatal Petrobras, in conjunction with Venezuela's PDVSA and a local Cuban partner, intend to construct a USD 20 million lubricant factory in Havana, Cuba. While Petrobras sources note that under "ideal circumstances" the contract would be three-way, Cuban foreign ownership laws do not allow this as they only permit Petrobras and PDVSA to own a total of 49 percent.

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